

Parish Update

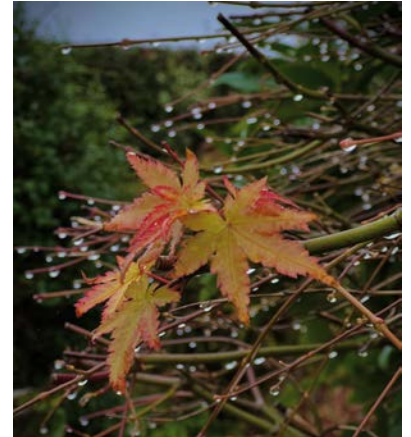
September - October 2026

Dear Parish Councils,

Thank you, as always, for the work taking place across our twelve Parishes. This update comes at an important point for rural communities. The revised **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)** is now in force, Cheshire West and Chester is moving into a new **30-month Local Plan process**, and the Government's standard method has substantially increased the housing figure the Borough must plan for.



For Marbury's villages, the central question is how necessary housing and economic growth can be accommodated without losing the character of separate settlements, overloading narrow roads and drainage, or placing additional pressure on schools, health services and utilities. Parish Councils have an important role in building the evidence now - before strategic choices and site allocations become fixed.



We will be making submissions on behalf of the Ward throughout the Local Plan process and encourage Parish Councils and residents to also engage throughout the consultation periods. We will keep you updated as we hear more and the wider impacts of the revised NPPF are shared.

With the support of a few helpers, we have also started to work our way around the Ward to highlight the importance of the Local Plan for our villages with residents. (as well as ensuring residents register to vote for next year's all-out Council, Mayoral and maybe General elections!)



Regards,

Cllrs Lynn Gibbon, Phil Marshall & Norman Wright

1. Highways, verges and rural transport

Report It - keep the evidence coming

The Council's online reporting routes remain the first place to log potholes, drainage defects, blocked gullies, fly-tipping, street cleansing, grass and grounds-maintenance issues. For persistent problems, please send your ward councillors the report reference, a photograph, the exact location and the date reported. That evidence makes escalation much more effective.

[Report a problem](#) | [Roads and highways](#)



Ongoing ward-work around our network to improve visibility and report damage

itravel on-demand rural bus

The expanded itravel service is now operating across a wider rural area, including Thornton-le-Moors, Great Barrow and Ashton to the east and Whitegate and Acton Bridge to the west. Unlike a conventional bus, journeys are booked in advance and routes adapt to demand. For residents without easy access to a car, this can help connect villages to shops, work, education, healthcare and rail services.

[itravel On Demand](#)

2. Planning: a defining period for rural communities

Updated National Planning Policy Framework - what has changed?

The Government published the updated NPPF on 17 August 2026. The Council's own Member Briefing confirms that it is now a material consideration for planning applications and must also shape the new Local Plan. The framework has been substantially restructured, gives increased weight to housing delivery and meeting housing needs in sustainable locations, supports suitable development within defined settlements, gives greater support to small sites and intensification, reduces the weight of older policies where they conflict with the new framework, and places greater emphasis on planning as a tool for economic growth.

For rural communities this is a mixed picture. National policy can support homes that meet genuine local need, rural exception sites, agricultural modernisation, farm diversification and rural businesses. Those can help villages remain living communities rather than places from which younger families and local workers are priced out. But stronger housing-delivery expectations also increase the importance of having current, evidence-led local policies that direct development to the right places.

The housing number has risen sharply

The Council's current planning evidence says the Government standard-method figure for Cheshire West and Chester is a minimum of 1,914 homes a year. Over a 15-year plan period that is 28,710 homes. The adopted Local Plan Part One planned for 22,000 homes from 2010 to 2030 - an average of 1,100 a year. This does not mean 28,710 homes will

be spread evenly, but it does mean the new Local Plan must make strategic choices about where a much higher level of growth can be accommodated.

It is also important to keep the delivery picture in perspective: Council monitoring reports 22,862 net completions between 2010 and 2026, more than 5,000 above the pro-rata requirement in the existing plan, and the 2025 Housing Delivery Test recorded delivery at 244% of the requirement used for that test. The debate is therefore not simply about whether homes are being built, but about the future requirement, location, type, affordability, infrastructure and cumulative impact of growth.

Local Plan timetable - and the period of uncertainty

The current strategic Local Plan Part One dates from 2015 and Part Two from 2019. In 2025 the Council's published timetable anticipated adoption of a replacement in summer/autumn 2027. The Council subsequently switched to the new national plan-making system; its current timetable now targets adoption on 1 December 2028. That is roughly 14-17 months later than the 2025 published adoption window, rather than a three-year slippage from that timetable. However, it does extend the period in which older local policies must operate alongside a substantially changed national framework and a higher housing requirement. For rural communities, that makes early evidence and neighbourhood planning particularly important.

The 21-day scoping consultation closed on 28 September. Gateway 1 is scheduled for 16 October, with the next six-week consultation on proposed Local Plan content and evidence due to open on 23 November 2026. That next stage should be treated as a key opportunity for Parish Councils to submit coordinated evidence about settlement character, infrastructure capacity and appropriate locations and forms of development.

[New Local Plan](#) | [Local Plan timetable](#) | [NPPF / planning reform](#)

What Parish Councils can do now to protect village identity and plan positively

- Build a parish evidence pack. Map flooding and drainage problems, highway pinch-points, pedestrian safety issues, school and GP capacity, utilities constraints, valued views, public rights of way, heritage assets, biodiversity and important green gaps.
- Define settlement character and identity. Record what makes each village distinct - landscape setting, historic street pattern, building scale and materials, key approaches, gaps between settlements and views that contribute to local identity.
- Review or prepare a Neighbourhood Plan. An up-to-date plan can turn community evidence into statutory planning policy, including locally specific design, housing mix and site principles where supported by evidence.
- Engage with the Borough Design Code consultation. Ask whether the draft rules are strong enough for rural lanes, village edges, landscape transitions, parking, boundary treatments, drainage, trees, materials and locally distinctive design.
- Evidence local housing need. Support the right homes - including affordable housing, smaller homes, accessible homes and homes for older residents - rather than treating housing numbers alone as the objective.
- Make infrastructure a core test. Press for cumulative assessment of roads, drainage, sewerage, schools, healthcare, public transport and utilities, and for necessary mitigation to be secured alongside development.
- Protect separation between villages. Identify green gaps, landscape features and approaches that prevent coalescence and sprawl, and explain their function with evidence rather than relying only on general opposition to development.
- Track sites and applications collectively. Maintain a parish planning log so that incremental development and cumulative impacts are visible over time.
- Work across parish boundaries. Traffic, drainage, school places and landscape do not stop at parish lines. Joint evidence from neighbouring councils can be more persuasive on strategic issues.
- Engage early and constructively. The strongest position is a clear statement of what growth the community can support, where it should go, what form it should take and what infrastructure must accompany it.

Major schemes and enforcement

We continue to monitor strategic proposals and enforcement cases affecting the ward (50+ currently), including the Peak Cluster CO2 pipeline proposals and the Winnington Solar Farm / Wallerscote Lime Beds area. Where cases are live, we will share confirmed information at the appropriate formal stage rather than speculate. Residents can search and comment on applications through the Council's planning portal.

[Search planning applications](#)

3. Current and forthcoming Council consultations

Checked on 2 October 2026. Consultation pages change regularly, so residents should also use the Council's main consultation page. The Local Plan scoping and Sustainability Appraisal consultations closed on 28 September.

Consultation / engagement	Why it matters	Deadline / link
Draft Cheshire West and Chester Design Code	A borough-wide set of design rules and guidance covering nature, movement, public space, built form and identity. Particularly relevant to Parish Councils seeking stronger protection for rural character and better-quality development.	24 November 2026
Routine statutory consultations	Licensing, environmental permitting, neighbourhood planning and individual planning applications are consulted on as cases arise. These can be locally important even when there is no borough-wide survey open.	Varies by case

[Design Code consultation](#) | [All Council consultations](#)

Next major Local Plan opportunity: the Council timetable says consultation on proposed Local Plan content and evidence is due from 23 November 2026 to 8 January 2027. Parish Councils may wish to prepare evidence and agree priorities before that window opens.

4. Household Waste Recycling Centres - registration is now mandatory

From 1 October, residents should register their vehicle before visiting one of the Borough's seven Household Waste Recycling Centres. Once registered, ANPR recognises the vehicle and proof of address is no longer required at each visit. Each household can register up to three vehicles, including one commercial-type vehicle, and receives 30 visits in a rolling 12-month period. The Council says residents who arrive unregistered may be turned away.

Residents without a smartphone or computer can receive help for a standard vehicle registration by calling 0300 123 7026, and library staff can assist with online registration.

[Find a recycling centre / register](#)

5. Recent Council news worth knowing

Neighbourhood Pride award - nominations open

A new Neighbourhood Pride category has been added to Cheshire West Voluntary Action's annual awards. Residents can nominate a person, project or group that has made a positive difference during 2026. Nominations close on 6 November, with the awards event on 26 November. This could be a useful opportunity to recognise volunteers and community projects across Marbury's villages.

[Neighbourhood Pride award](#)

Annual electoral canvass

Households may receive canvass communications during September and October. Some forms require a response even where there are no changes. Residents should read the form or email carefully and respond where instructed so the electoral register remains accurate.

[Annual canvass information](#)

6. Community Development: The Antrobus Loaf opens its doors

Congratulations to everyone behind the Antrobus Loaf, the new community-owned shop and cafe on Knutsford Road. The official opening on 9 September welcomed around 200 guests and marked the culmination of a seven-year journey from the original idea, through a temporary caravan shop, fundraising, planning and construction, to a permanent community facility.

The project is a strong example of rural community action. It is not simply somewhere to buy essentials or stop for coffee: it creates a place to meet, supports social connection, gives residents and visitors a reason to spend time in the village and strengthens local resilience by retaining a service within the community. That matters particularly in rural areas, where the loss of even one shop, meeting place or transport connection can have an outsized effect on older residents, families and people without ready access to a car.

Opening hours reported at launch: daily, 9.00am-12.30pm, with last orders at 12.15pm. Residents, visitors, walkers, cyclists and families are all welcome.



[Read the opening story](#)

Community funding and Member Budgets

Each Cheshire West and Chester councillor has a £5,000 Member Budget for 2026/27 to support community projects. Applications close on 31 December 2026 and funded activity must be delivered by 31 March 2027. Parish Councils and community organisations with practical proposals should make contact early while funds remain available.

The current Cheshire West Crowd round also has funding available for community-led projects. The Council's climate information states that projects seeking support in the current round must be verified by Spacehive and live on the platform by 21 October 2026, with funding panels in the week commencing 16 November.

[Member Budgets](#) | [Cheshire West Crowd](#)

7. Policing and community safety

A recent Cllr briefing included demonstrations and briefings from Cheshire Police's drone, dog and public-order teams. For residents, the key practical message remains to report crime and anti-social behaviour through the correct channel so that incidents are recorded and patterns can be identified.

Call 999 where there is an immediate danger or crime in progress. For non-emergency crime and anti-social behaviour, use Cheshire Police online reporting or 101.

[Cheshire Police](#)

8. Key dates at a glance

16 October 2026	Local Plan Gateway 1 - formal start of the 30-month plan preparation period
21 October 2026	Current Cheshire West Crowd round - project verification/go-live deadline stated by Council
6 November 2026	Neighbourhood Pride award nominations close
23 November 2026	Proposed Local Plan content and evidence consultation scheduled to open
24 November 2026	Draft Design Code consultation closes
31 December 2026	Member Budget applications close
8 January 2027	Scheduled close of Local Plan content and evidence consultation
1 December 2028	Current target date for adoption of the new Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan

Sources and further reading

- [CW&C consultations](#)
- [CW&C Council news](#)
- [Local Plan wider planning context](#)
- [Housing evidence / delivery](#)
- [Housing Delivery Test](#)
- [Government planning reform / NPPF publication](#)
- [HWRC registration update](#)
- [Neighbourhood Pride award](#)